

OLD BURY

*K*  
CANDOUR TRAVERSTIE;

OR,

NATURE AND GRACE.

"IN UNDERSTANDING BE YE MEN,"

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NATURE

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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE Author of the few following lines does not affix his name, as he is desirous it should, like himself, remain in obscurity. But, as many of his neighbours, and acquaintance, had previous knowledge of their being ushered into the world—to such (as well as others of his readers) he will make no other apology for the freedom of his pen, than assuring them, that when he first set it to paper, he had not the least intent of publishing; and meant them only as private amusement.—That he hopes no one will take umbrage at any thing they contain; as he had not the most distant thought of giving offence to one individual.—That he reveres the priesthood, and respects virtuous cha-

characters as much as any man—That, although he is no friend to bigotry, superstition, and enthusiasm, wherever indulged, or however dignified; he is still less a friend to jesting and drollery in religious concerns; or the making religion, or any of its professors, the subject of irony and ridicule—That his most sincere and ardent wish is, that every RATIONAL CREATURE on earth may become a RATIONAL CHRISTIAN; and that every such CHRISTIAN may become a RATIONAL WORSHIPPER of that God, who wills, that all should Worship him in Spirit and Truth---Of that Being, whose every Attribute are Excellencies---Whose every Excellence are in their utmost possible degree of Perfection---And whose REASON is INFINITE.



[ 2 ]

OLD BURY CANDOR, &c.

THERE was a time, in days of yore,  
When men revil'd, blasphem'd and swore;  
When vice had rear'd her baneful head,  
And genuine religion fled:  
When sons of Belial and of plunder,  
Had broke the bands of peace afunder,  
Nor at their homes would stay in quiet,  
But roam and ravage, mob and riot.

In later days, (or Fame tells lies)  
Mankind to Baal did sacrifice,  
Nor once set GOD before their eyes,  
As one sad proof, men still do make,  
God's holy-day a carnal wake,  
Not for their Lord's, but belly's sake.  
Of these, where mirth and sport abound,  
Each village had its annual round:  
Where youth and innocence were spoil'd,  
And VIRTUE often bash'd or foiled;

B

Where

Where country bumpkins of each sex,  
By fix and sevens together mix.

What! tho' are seen no London shows,  
No duchess, courtiers, belles, or beaux,  
Like them they make a Sunday rout,  
A drinking, gaming, dancing bout.

Lord! that thy day shou'd be profan'd,  
And city of the world thus stain'd!

In Oldbury town these festive days,  
Had long been spent in sports and plays;  
When one more grave arose at last,  
Regretting follies that were past,  
Determin'd it shou'd be the last time,  
He wink'd at such ungodly pastime;  
On which a day was soon appointed,  
To meet and hear the Lord's anointed;  
And many folks from far were brought,  
Not to be fed, but better taught—  
—To express their thanks to God, and some  
For joy they'd carried harvest home.

Tho'



Tho' some now think it had relation,  
 To what the church call consecration,  
 And others judge it an allusion,  
 To horrid times of persecution;  
 Howe'er it was, parson and people,  
 Met at the church without a steeple.  
 Then was it called, as some conjecture,  
**OLDBURY ANNUAL DOUBLE LECTURE.**

For, from a sense of piety,  
 And fondness for variety,  
 Two ministers to preach were fixed on,  
 And each of these to chuse the next one.

Not to contend who shou'd be masters,  
 Much less met there these rev'rend pastors,  
 To gain a hat or pair of breeches,  
 As some have guess'd, who were no witches.

This was their aim, and this their strife,  
 To form each mind and mend the life;  
 To teach that wisdom's excellence  
 Consisteth not in flesh or sense,

In

In meats, nor drinks, and yet much less  
 In pleasures taken to excess,  
 And that Heav'n's kingdom lies within,  
 A heart made clean and free from sin;  
 In pure desires and holy lives,  
 And not in nine and twenty knives\*;  
 They shew'd man's dignity of nature,  
 And yet that he's a fallen creature;  
 And taught from nature's gen'ral laws,  
 What reason and what scripture draws,  
 And when a firm foundation's laid,  
 Brought REVELATION to their aid;  
 Where justice does with nicest scale,  
 Our actions weigh, and truth reveal,  
 Wherein men err—how much they fail;  
 Then placing in a moral view,  
 That worship which to GOD is due;  
 They pointed out in clearest light,  
 That good to which no man had right;  
 The wise, the kind, th' amazing plan  
 Of GOD, by Christ redeeming man,

\* Alluding to a text from which a sermon, it has been said, was preached at Oldbury church, during the wake.

When



When Jesus came for our salvation,  
The beauty, glory of creation.

But soon among these worthy prelates,  
Crept in some ign'rant forward zealots,  
Whose souls were narrow'd at creation,  
And reason warp'd by education;  
In whose decisions of free grace,  
Mens understandings have no place;  
(Yet they presume 'twas God's good pleasure,  
To bless them with superior measure),  
Interpreting just as they please  
Jehovah's first and high decrees.

That some are chosen God's elected,  
And others, tho' no means neglected,  
Are by him totally rejected.

Our nature's rating at the worst,  
Some said that soul and body's curst,  
And argued that poor infants' sin,  
Before a thought does lodge within,  
Or, evil action can begin—

C

That

That all the human race to Hell  
 Were doom'd when Eve and Adam fell;  
 And that their sons ere since have carry'd  
 The load intail'd—before they marry'd

Others on Christ their burthens laid,  
 Since he for us the ransom paid;  
 And deem God's justice satisfied,  
 Because the prince of Heav'n has died;  
 As if *vindictive wrath* had sent  
 The son to bleed—or that he meant  
 To suffer, as our punishment:  
 While some assert, that souls in durance  
 Are kept, till men have got assurance,  
 And then the sinner, if he will,  
 May draw on Christ—he'll pay the bill:  
 All flock to hear those doctrines given,  
 As easiest, cheapest way to Heaven!

Alike were those, or not much better,  
 Who taught the law only in letter;  
 As th' elephant, when busy minding,  
 The margin—out-side, gold and binding;

So



So sounds, or words, seem'd of more merit  
With them, than gospel-sense and spirit.

On faith, these made their sole reliance,  
Bidding to noble deeds defiance:  
What ere was preach'd by James or Paul,  
Or Jesus spoke—they roundly call  
“Man’s righteousness, but *filthy rags*,”  
Which gives not only room for wags,  
Encourag’d thus, the wicked faith,  
I shall be saved, if I’ve faith.

Some make orthodox not Arian,  
The true religion’s grand criterion;  
And others judge, by mere opinion,  
Of Luther, Calvin, and Socinian,  
Of the Moravian, or Armenian.  
*Faith still must be pinn’d on their sleeve,*  
Like bloody Mary’s, “Take—believe,  
“Or Death and Hell you’ll surely have.”

Or like the Scots, when cov’nant taken,  
If not immediately forsaken,

Th’

Th' adherers, tho' strict oaths had bound,  
By cruel soldiers were dragoon'd,

Yet when their faith they were explaining,  
No conjurer present knew their meaning;  
For, using metaphors so quaint,  
They puzzled sinner and the saint.

By some, most tenderly Faiths/handed,  
By others, box'd about and bandied;  
At last, I fear, by many scores,  
True genuine Faith's kick'd out of doors.

But Times have been when (stranger still)  
Priests led men blindfold at their will,  
And held the consciences of their votaries,  
As credit is by public notaries;  
For (jugler like, that makes pretence,  
To cheat the eye and common sense);  
They could, when *hic et hoc* was said,  
Their Deity turn into bread;  
Convert their Saviour's flesh to dough;  
His blood to wine—but not enough—

That



*That* chang'd to wafers—as Christ's meat,  
 Was given the vulgar sort to eat,  
 To *this*, when blest, as holy wine,  
 The priests claim'd right, as more divine:  
 Nay hocus-pocus—such its power,  
 When each did each his Lord devour,  
 Could hundreds more make in an hour.

To tell, it wou'd my pen degrade,  
 Their worship, or what honour paid  
 To musty relicks, or to saints,  
 To bones of monks and mendicants;  
 As likewise endless for to mention,  
 Miracles of their own invention,  
 Their images—their crucifix—  
 And penance done for naughty tricks;  
 Their pontiff's blessings or his curses,  
 And what his pardons costs folks purses—  
 —Howe'er they wisely hide the bible,  
 As on their church it is a libel.

In our most holy church are some,  
 Remov'd from priest-craft and from Rome,

D

Yet

Yet do by arts less gross than those,  
On weak, tho' pious minds impose,

Have you not seen a B——p's hand  
Dispensing blessings at command?  
Whose all-absolving power was such,  
That healing grace lay in his touch;  
Which when diffus'd on every head,  
His hands could reach, with fingers spread;  
He lets divine effluvia fly,  
To all the wondering standers-by;  
In short, his art so far transcends,  
You'd think heaven at his finger ends.

Some youths believe that confirmation,  
Gives to the soul a new creation;  
Others presume that this transaction,  
Atones for every sinful action;  
While sceptics sneering go their way,  
As if they had seen a farce or play.

No wonder England's such a nation,  
When pious frauds so much in fashion!

Nay,



Nay, some who know God ne'er delights,  
 In popish tricks or pagan rites,  
 And all their mysteries despise,  
 Yet try to cheat the ear and eyes,  
 By dint of more than twice eight notes,  
 They cram religion down your throats,  
 And oft the want of sense supply,  
 By voice ascending to the sky;  
 Altho' they know that true devotion  
 Lies not in matter, nor in motion,  
 That charity's not propagated  
 By sound, as scripture has related;  
 For words vociferous when tost  
 In air, the boundless roar is lost.

When wisdom cries, her voice is known  
 To all the children of her own;  
 Which gently as the dew distils,  
 And wisp'ring soft with pleasure fills,  
 Not the judicially blind,  
 But him who has a THINKING MIND.

Others, to shew for church their care,  
 By sound of bell, bid all prepare,

Their

Their Lord's itinerant to meet,  
 In open field or public street;  
 The hour is come—the pious crowd,  
 Soon as they hear the text aloud,  
 With open mouths, their souls are craving,  
 The parson ranting, roaring, raving,  
 White handkerchief in circles waving;  
 —'Tis then they take large draughts of grace,  
 And shrug and say, "Heaven's in this place;"  
 But when at home, know not a word,  
 Their preacher spoke—but Christ and Lord!

Oft have I seen a zealot stand,  
 Just come from church, with pot in hand,  
 —"How sweet was Christ!—Oh I could hug!"  
 He cries, and clasps his dearer mug.

O! pity, pity, souls are taught,  
 Or even to such a frame are wrought,  
 Their God to worship and adore,  
 As some cits do a bawd, or w—e!

—*Personne n'est exempt de folie—Chacun à se Marvie.*

Whilst



Whilst *vice* holds none but folly in her arms,  
Virtue embraces only virtue's charms.

There is a sect, who nothing care for,  
But their own ergo's, why's, and wherefore;  
Who neither swear, nor stoop, nor bow,  
And seldom speak—but with a thou?

To fight our battles, never list,  
Nor use a sword—a club—or fist;  
Who think, without a certain spirit,  
One cannot future life inherit;  
Nor to hold forth, in public venture,  
Until first prompted by this Mentor,  
Who always wear an humble garment,  
Which, if no good, there is no harm in't;  
For clothes, and creeds, are wisely us'd,  
Nor time, nor talents, oft abus'd,

GIVE me the man, whose steady zeal,  
Seeks every *christian church's* weal:  
Knowing that grace, like rain, is given,  
To every mortal under Heaven,

owT

E

That

That all of mercy may partake,  
 Through Christ, who will their sins forsake  
 In whose harangues (what ere the case is)  
 Truth is his theme, and truth his basis;  
 Whose eloquence (altho' commanding)  
 Addresseth first the understanding;  
 Then practising the pleasing art,  
 To win th' affections and the heart;  
 He sets all prejudice aside,  
 Takes hold of reason as a guide,  
 Adopts his blessed master's plan,  
 To improve the soil where'er he can,  
 To root out ev'ry noxious weed,  
 And then to sow the heav'nly seed;  
 In none but hearts sincere he shows,  
 Pure undefil'd religion grows,  
 Which his own life and conversation  
 Holds out to others' approbation;  
 Its charms, its pleasures, he sets forth,  
 Intrinsic beauties, and its worth.

Thus in Christ's vineyard labour'd long,  
 And thus preach'd to the attentive throng.



Two Rev'rend Dons at Oldbury Meeting,  
 'Till certain brethren join'd them greeting;  
 Whose preaching did (for such its nature)  
 Distort religion's loveliest feature;  
 For with their fav'rite notions fraught,  
 They undid what before was taught;  
 Destroy'd the harmony of soul,  
 Or in their fetters bound the whole;  
 Else rais'd a ferment in the mind,  
 Like alkalies and acids join'd.

Such was a Pres—an orthodox,  
 The shepherd of some northern flock;  
 Who for to propagate his faith,  
 (His zeal was such as story faith)  
 He vow'd he'd ride five hundred miles,  
 To Robin Hood's, or John o'Stiles!

Appointed to succeed his brother,  
 (For down comes one—up gets another)  
 He thank'd him first—but soon 'twas found,  
 He levell'd all was said to th' ground:

Some

Some good folks laugh'd (or they're belied)  
 And others look'd as if they cried;  
 While numbers, soon as Prees they see,  
 And heard his hodge-podge rhapsody,  
 Were cloath'd with grace all cap-a-pee.

Since, just as if each word was hallow'd,  
 Come sense or nonsense—all was swallow'd;  
 For good there was mix'd with the trash,  
 Like sweet provisions thrown i'th' wash;  
 Of which the parson pick'd a bit,  
 (For he had humour, if not wit)  
 And, with his hand to bosom prest,  
 Ecstatic cries, "With this I'm blest"  
 "These heav'nly portions do me good—"  
 "They fire my spirits—warm my blood."

Then handling of some doubtful text,  
 Which has the learned world perplex't,  
 He (Jesuit like as ever pifs'd)  
 Did turn about, and twine and twist,  
 The sense and meaning as he list:  
 Of



Of Godhead he made such a jumble,  
 As caus'd both fools and wise to stumble,  
 And all attendant angels grumble;  
 In short, precise to be his Christian,  
 Good sense you must put out o' question;  
 Like him I heard, on certain season,  
 Damn God's best gift to man, his reason.

The Dons determin'd that such culprits,  
 Should never more ascend their pulpits;  
 They form'd a council after dinner,  
 —But who propos'd, or who beginner,  
 I have not learn'd—but this I know,  
 All was conducted *status quo*.

Not held like English Parliament  
 ('Mongst whom one scarce can find a saint)  
 Nor cardinal-like in conclave shut,  
 Each member to their vote was put;  
 Who soon agreed (all things arrang'd)  
 The choice of preachers shou'd be chang'd:  
 The lot (whom all seem'd to confide in)  
 Fell on the parson there residing.

But this decree, so fair, so just,  
 Yet to some bigots gave disgust;  
 And soon one, with more zeal than skill,  
 (Perhaps some brother of the quill),  
 Brought forth what he call'd Oldbury Candour,  
 Since justly christen'd Oldbury Slander;  
 If what is false, and weak, or lame,  
 And empty too, deserves the name;  
 For TRUTH, when she holds her court-martial,  
 Will find his pen throughout is partial;  
 Since he, tho' latent, does defame,  
 Under the initials of each name,  
 Some brethren held in high repute,  
 Tho' of their virtues wholly mute.

So weak his props—so few his holders—  
 He Stourbridge\* brings in head and shoulders;  
 Condemning author, or his book,  
 Yet judging not by ear nor look.

\* Referring to a sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Carpenter, of Stourbridge, on Candour, or Christian Charity, &c. at Dudley Double Lecture, and afterwards published by desire.

But



But as a pamphlet's now in print,  
 Which, if the world look wisely in't;  
 The impartial world then soon cou'd tell,  
 One does the other far excel;  
 As Handel, late, musician's hero,  
 Tweedle-dum-dee, or lillibilero.

But if this piece you'd have dissected,  
 And all its errors with detected;  
 Or tell what he insinuates,  
 Or give true history of their debates;  
 Which shew'd to what their meetings tend,  
 The great importance, aim, and end,  
 Of truths they came there to defend.

The nature, duty, worth of man—  
 Sure Richmond ne'er drew such a plan!  
 Such genius, dignity, and wit,  
 Ne'er grac'd a Burke, a Fox, a Pitt!  
 Such serious, solemn oratory!  
 (If theirs the praise, God has the glory)

I say, my friend, with your permission, and  
(Avoiding present repetition) }  
I'll give them in my next edition; }  
Which may be much the better thing, }  
God bless the Church, and save the King. }